
JOURNAL OF THE BARBER COIN COLLECTORS' SOCIETY

Volume 8, #1

Spring 1997

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1892-0, Micro-0, Half



MS-67, from the Eliasberg catalog

(photo courtesy Bowers and Merena)

Contents

- ❖ BCCS President's Message2
- ❖ Editor's Message3
- ❖ Treasury Report4
- ❖ Previewing the Eliasberg Catalog ... by Russell Easterbrooks8
- ❖ Barber Quarters, Population Changes
in the Last Six Years ... by Dave Lawrence12
- ❖ An Interesting 1908-O Dime ... by Jack White14
- ❖ Reasons for Counterstamping ... by Russell Easterbrooks16
- ❖ A Vermont Coin Show ... by Russell Easterbrooks18
- ❖ A Pictorial Barber Dime ... by Jack White19
- ❖ Charles Barber, Profile of a
Mint Engraver ... by Greg Smith20
- ❖ Barber Bits23





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BCCS CHARTER MEMBER #2

JOURNAL OF THE
BARBER COIN COLLECTORS' SOCIETY

Published quarterly. Dedicated to bringing together people with similar interests in Barber Coinage for the purpose of advancing appreciation of this series.

OFFICERS

- Philip CarriganPresident
- Russell EasterbrooksEditor, BCCS Journal
- Paul ReuterSecretary/Treasurer
- Tom MulvaneyPhotographer
- Regular Contributing EditorJack White

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For membership dues, and information about the BCCS, back issues of the BCCS Journal: Paul Reuter, 415 Ellen Drive, Brookhaven, MS 39601.

For Society issues in general, etc.: Phil Carrigan, 1105 N. Crescent Court, Round Lake, IL 60073.

ON THE COVER

Gem. MS-67, 1892-O “Micro-O” half, finest known, from the Eliasberg Collection. (*Photo courtesy of Bowers and Merena*)

Walter Breen credits Howard Newcomb with discovering this variety. However Augustus G. Heaton commented in his work, “Mint Marks” published in 1893 that: “There is one rare variety of this piece, (1892-O half) with an exceedingly small “O”, hardly larger than a period.”

From: Bowers and Merena’s catalog of the Eliasberg Collection

THE JOURNAL NEEDS YOUR ARTICLES!

If you’ve got some information to share with our Society,
we’d like to publish it. Our Society needs your input!
Send your articles and information for the Barber Bits section to:
Russell at the above address.

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE IS: JUNE 15th.



BCCS PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to 1997 (as late in the year as it is) and a new year for the Society. The most notable aspect of news for BCCS is our editor, Russell Easterbrooks. I can report working with Russell is highly rewarding and pleasant. He brings ideas and enthusiasm which are both helpful and infectious. I (again) encourage the individual who has an interesting idea concerning Barbers or some insight into collecting or whatever, to give Russell a call for some encouragement or direction on a contribution to the *Journal*. You will be pleased with the end result.

Question: How does a collector become rejuvenated in their interest in numismatics or in some specialty aspect? Additionally, if I'm sitting in Round Lake reading a *Coin World* each week and getting a dealer fixed price list now and then, is this enough? Well, I don't think so. There is of course always the monthly local coin club meeting or the annual coin show at the Moose Hall but these have not been big stimulators for me. What works? I suggest going on the road, flying to some distant place and attending a major show or auction. You will see the great inventories of major dealers and begin to meet a circle of knowledgeable dealers and collectors. When one is willing to spend two or three thousand dollars for a great Barber, doesn't spending \$500 or more yearly on an educational trip seem appropriate. (Consider if you wish, the trip as a pure reconnaissance mission!)

I'm mentioning this aspect because I'll be a looker (possible buyer) at the Eliasberg Sale in April. My earlier experience at Eliasberg was most rewarding, including close examination of his Barber Dimes. Obviously, this upcoming sale has more Barbers, several very special dates and varieties, along with many classic rarities. Our Editor has obtained advance photos of notable Barbers, so this expedition should prove to be most rewarding.

I am aware of some concerns that our *Journal* appears to be authored by a single contributor. This comment specifically applied to the recent Winter 1996 issue and the contributor is Phil Carrigan. I agree with this assessment; we do not have a *Journal* when contributions are dominated by one author. Most of you know what will now follow: new contributors are most welcome and eagerly awaited (this last issue has two new authors I believe). In this issue you will find contributions from Russell Easterbrooks which I believe are important and interesting. Each of us are committed to seeing the *Journal* issued on a timely basis with reasonable content and pages. When Society members provide material, there is little need to prepare short articles and re-

printed material to make up an issue. Russell and I are always pleased to hear from a member on any aspect of the Society.

thanks,
Phil Carrigan

tel: (847) 937-5129 day

(847) 546-5609 eve

(847) 938-2510 Fax

Email: philip.carrigan@abbott.com



FROM THE EDITOR

Those of you familiar with my past articles will recognize my interest in the historic aspects of numismatics. I plan to supplement the information contained in our *Journal* with interesting Barber related history. I hope this will benefit researchers, and continue to inform the Barber enthusiast.

Enhancing member contributions to our *Journal* has been foremost on my mind. It seems many members feel their experiences are unimportant or too small to write into an article. Writing an article can be as easy as writing a letter. Don't be afraid to try. I will edit and touch-up your work, making your Barber experiences part of our *Journal*.

Beginning with this *Journal*, I have established a section called "Barber Bits." Here members can submit a few sentences about Barber sightings, information found in other publications (be sure to list the publication), research information, Barber history, trivia, etc. The idea being that sending a few informative sentences is far less intimidating than writing an article.

I would also like to find some members who would like to be regular contributing editors. This would help to organize future *Journals* and hopefully expand our *Journal's* content. If you would be interested in submitting an article for each *Journal*, please drop me a letter. Regular contributing editor's names will be printed along with our Society's Officers. I want to thank Jack White for volunteering to be a regular contributing editor. Your informative articles are greatly enjoyed. As always, we need photos of interesting Barbers. Send all coins registered mail to my address and I will see they are photographed and returned to you in a timely manner.

I hope a member comes forward with some articles on Liberty nickels. I am not opposed to using articles about any aspect of Charles Barber's work patterns, medals, commemoratives, etc. Remember, our Society was established

to inform, educate, and bring Barber enthusiasts together, furthering our enjoyment with numismatics.

If you will be attending a coin club meeting or show, and would like to help recruit new members to our Society, contact me for some membership forms. It's important to notify as many Barber enthusiasts as possible about our Society's commitment to the future of Barber collecting.

This *Journal* contains a wealth of Barber information from the Eliasberg collection. I want to thank Dave Bowers and his staff for considering our Society with this information and photos. I would also like to thank all the members who contributed to helping me get this Journal organized as our Society's new editor. A special thanks to Dave, John, Paul and Phil, who's commitment to our Society is exceptional. Please write me with your ideas, comments, and suggestions. It will help me with future *Journals*.

Russell Easterbrooks



TREASURY REPORT

TWELVE MONTHS ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1996

Opening Balance, Jan. 1, 1996	\$3,735.34
Receipts:	
Dues	\$5,370.00
Back Issues	324.50
Donation	110.00
Advertising	1,200.00
FUNDS AVAILABLE	\$7,004.50
Expenditures:	
Journal Production	\$6,331.62
Postage	140.78
Donation	25.00
Bank Charges	8.76
ANA Dues & Conv	181.00
Misc.	10.00
TOTAL	\$6,697.00
Closing Balance, Dec. 31, 1996	\$4,042.00

Paul Reuter, Treasurer/Secretary



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Russell,

I think we need to take some kind of survey to see how many collectors collect varieties and to what extent. I may be the only one who considers it a different variety just because of a difference in the position of the date or mint mark, but there may be more. It would be interesting to know.

Thanks,
Jon Potts

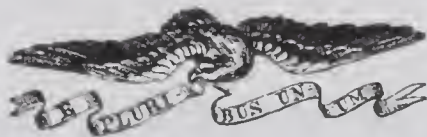
Editor's note: Thanks for the letter Jon! I am in the process of putting together a survey flyer, which will be part of the membership renewal form in the Fall 1997 Journal. This will allow the membership to "Kill two birds with one stone," and results of the survey will be published in the winter 1997 Journal. SO SEND ME YOUR QUESTIONS, IDEAS, ETC. FOR THIS SURVEY.



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Many double-die varieties are among those being certified and encapsulated by Numismatic Guaranty Corporation under its new VarietyPlus grading service. The varieties recognized by NGC include all those listed in the following reference books:

- The Cherrypickers' Guide to Rare Die Varieties (except ones designated "low interest").
- The Cherrypickers' Pocket Guide Top 150
- The Top 100 Morgan Dollars Varieties: The VAM Keys
- The Red Book (A Guide Book of United States Coins)
- Sheldon and Newcomb large cents
- Overton half dollars
- The Cherrypickers' Pocket Guide Top 150

NGC does not certify varieties which are not listed in one of the references cited above, nor does it certify error coins, with the exception of the 1943 bronze cents and 1994 steel cents.

The cost for VarietyPlus service is \$20 per coin, with a turnaround time of 21 working days. The maximum insured value for each coin is \$1000. Those submitting higher valued coins or desiring faster turnaround coin can use one of NGC's other grading services and just add \$5 per coin. More information about VarietyPlus can be obtained by calling NGC toll-free at 1-800-NGC-COIN (642-2646).



BCCS ADVERTISEMENT RATES

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1 page outside rear cover1 issue\$125,	– 4 issues\$400

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY/TREASURER

Quite often members will include a note containing a thought when paying their dues. Occasionally a member will call me with a question and usually we have a brief chat about the hobby along with answering their question.

Recently a long-time member said that he went back to the first *Journal* and read through all the back issues. In doing so he rekindled his enthusiasm for Barbers and found many articles of interest the second time around. I thought this was a great idea. Not every article will be worth deep scrutiny but many are timeless or will even seem quite new. You may have missed a given article originally or maybe you didn't have the particular coin being featured, but now you do, so give it a try! I have most back *BCCS Journals* for sale, so contact me with your needs.

On another subject, new members may have noticed that on some membership applications an option is given regarding their names being given out to mailing lists. BCCS was originally set-up this way, but to my knowledge, this has never been done, at least not on my watch. So by now members can be assured that the Society does not offer membership lists to anyone.



BARBER DIME SPECIALIST, NOTE:

FOR SALE: 1895-O dime, XF-45 with beautiful album toning, 7 day return, price \$1550.00 firm. Contact George Wilson (charter member #8), P.O. Box 3363, Joilet, IL 60434. If you would like to call George for more information about this coin, he can be reached at 1-815-725-7746 after 5 pm. This coin is not available in this condition very often, so don't miss this opportunity!

BACK ISSUES:

For back issues of the *BCCS JOURNAL*, contact:
PAUL REUTER. His address is located on page 1 of the *Journal*.
(The summer 1996 *Journal* contains an index, listing each article and *Journal*,
for your convenience.)

PREVIEWING THE ELIASBERG COLLECTION CATALOG

By Russell Easterbrooks

"The Eliasberg collection of Barber quarters and half dollars is exceptionally remarkable for its superb gem quality."

FROM: THE ELIASBERG CATALOG

Many of these coins, preserved for nearly a century, were purchased directly from the issuing mints by J.M. Clapp, whose collection then passed via his son to Louis Eliasberg. Bowers and Merena's cataloging of this landmark collection is superb in itself, documenting the various delivery dates of coins purchased from the mints. This information coupled with the incredibly detailed descriptions of minute die states will be of considerable value to the Barber enthusiast.

In most cases Philadelphia minted coins in this collection are represented as gem proofs. I have chosen a sampling of dates giving you the highlights of each coins description. I highly recommend adding this informative catalog to your Barber reference library. Dave Bowers also informs me he has a quantity of catalogs available from the first part of the Eliasberg sale held last year. What an outstanding collection of Barber dimes were sold in that sale! (See Phil Carrigan's article about that sale in the summer 1996 BCCS Journal.)

"In 1892 the new Barber silver coin designs appeared. There was not much notice paid to them, as the popular newspapers were agog with news of the impending World's Columbian Exposition and the commemorative coins to be produced in connection with it."

FROM: THE ELIASBERG CATALOG

BARBER QUARTERS:

1896-S, MS-65, "Quite possibly a presentation strike." Purchased from the San Francisco mint in October 1896.

1897-O, MS-67, "Possibly the finest known." Purchased from the New Orleans mint, November 1897. "On the obverse between GOD and WE there is a small raised hyphen-like die line, quite unusual."

1900-O, MS-67, "Condition Census Quality." Interesting clash marks can be seen in the area of Miss Liberty's chin and in front of her neck, due to the obverse and reverse dies coming together without an intervening planchet. Related clash marks from the obverse can be seen on the reverse, most particularly near the ribbon above and below the area of UM in the motto and above the arrows."

1901-S, MS-67, "Virtual perfection." Purchased from the San Francisco mint in March 1901.

1905-O, MS-67, Purchased from the mint in New Orleans in November 1905. "A very light die break from the 5 through the neck truncation to star 13, seemingly a stress point in the dies, and a place where breaks recur through the series.

1905-S, MS-67, "Possibly the finest known."

1912-S, MS-66, "Condition Census." "Interesting raised ridge on the inside of the downward element of the 2. There is also a break extending from the border diagonally up through 12 of the date to the bust point, at which place there is a spine or incipient break toward star 13."

1913-S, MS-67, "Superb gem." On the obverse a minute die crack is seen through the lower part of the 3 in the date, to the bust point, extending in the form of a thorn toward star 13.

BARBER HALF DOLLARS:

1892-O, Microscopic O MS-67, {Cover photo *BCCS Journal*}. "Far and away the finest seen of this famous variety, far in excess of the remarkable Pryor Collection coin, which was AU-58 and highly acclaimed as such, and finer than any other known to us including a small handful of mint state coins in lower numerical grades." This coin was described as having a die break on the obverse below star 1 and continues to the right through the base of the date numerals.

1896-S, MS-64/66, prooflike. This coin was purchased by J.M. Clapp from the mint in San Francisco in August 1896. The E in WE is separated from the olive leaf, instead of overlapping it slightly.

1897-O, MS-66, prooflike. "If the term 'Branch mint proof' is appropriate anywhere in the series, it is appropriate here." Purchased in November 1899, from the mint in New Orleans.

1899-O, MS-66, "Possibly the finest known." Purchased in November 1899 from the New Orleans mint. "A delicate die break appears connecting the last digit of the date with the neck tip and star 13."

1901-S, MS-66, Purchased from the mint in San Francisco in March 1901.

1904-S, MS-65/66, David Lawrence's comment is indeed appropriate: "The 1904-S has the lowest certified population in mint state and often commands a large premium." Purchased from the mint in San Francisco, November 1904.

1907-S, MS-66, Famous “Sleeper.” “Among half-dollar specialists the 1907-S has long been known as a formidable rarity.” There is a die crack and small cuds seen in the neck truncation above the numerals 190 and extending toward the 7. (*photo below*)

1911-D, MS-67, prooflike. “Possibly a presentation coin. (*photo below*)

Phil Carrigan, and no doubt other members, will be attending this incredible sale. Hopefully we will have an article in the next *Journal* with comments, and further inspection of what surely is the finest collection of mint state Barber coins ever assembled. If you’re fortunate enough to acquire any Barbers from this sale, please drop me a note with all the particulars.



1907-S



1911-D



(Photos courtesy Bowers and Merena)

Auctions by Bowers and Merena is pleased to present

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The staff of Auctions by Bowers and Merena, Inc. is now preparing the deluxe Grand Format™ color-illustrated catalogue which will describe United States coins of the 20-cents, 25-cents, 50-cents, silver dollar, and trade dollar series, as well as an important offering of United States paper money, a selection of 19th-century American tokens, and a group of gem-quality U.S. commemoratives.

THE AUCTION DATES ARE SET!

Sunday April 6 through Tuesday April 8, 1997. The St. Moritz Hotel, Central Park South, in New York City will be site of this once-in-a lifetime event, the same venue as used for the previous Eliasberg Collection sales.

HERE IS HOW YOU CAN PARTICIPATE

Catalogues, estimated to be over 200 pages in length and extensively illustrated, will be available for \$40 for advance order, or automatically as part of a \$95 subscription to all Bowers and Merena periodicals for the year 1997.

The following packages are offered:

☐ 1. A subscription to all Bowers and Merena publications for 1997 (including the final Eliasberg catalogue)—over \$200 in individual cover prices—just \$95 to U.S. addresses, \$150 to Canadian addresses and \$200 elsewhere.

☐ 1A. A deluxe hardbound copy of the final sale of Eliasberg catalogue (sent after the sale). List price: \$100. Now only \$80.

☐ 2. A deluxe hardbound copy of the final sale of The Louis E. Eliasberg, Sr. Collection (sent after the sale) plus a softbound copy sent prior to the sale. Total list price \$140. Now only \$100 (plus shipping).

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BARBER QUARTERS: How Have the Mint State Populations Changed in the Last Six Years?

By Dave Lawrence

I always like to look at the figures. They answer a lot of questions and raise new ones. For this analysis I looked at the PCGS/NGC combined populations from 1991 of eight Barber quarter dates in four mint state categories and compared them with the populations of January 1997. Seven of the dates are scarce keys and semi-keys. The eighth is the most common, 1916-d. The results are discussed below.

1896-S: In 1991 there were 10 low-mint state specimens certified (MS60-63), 10 MS64, 5 MS65 and none in MS66 and above. In 1997 there were 12, 9, 6 and 0 in each of these categories. How much did this change in 6 years? Very little. Only 2 more low-MS, 1 less MS64 and 1 more MS65. Still no MS66 and above. Incredible. In six years only two new specimens have come out. An increase of just 8% (=1.33%/year). This date ranked 4th in scarcity in 1989 in mint state and might be 1st now. It is definitely underrated.

1897-S: A surprisingly tough date. In 1991 there were just 5, 12, 2 & 1 certified in the four categories. Today this has risen to 12, 18, 7 and 4. So, unlike the 1896-S, the population has doubled. (Increase of 105%.)

1898-O: A date that ranked No. 1 in scarcity in 1989 when my book first came out. Just 8, 6, 2 & 2 in 1991, now 20, 13, 3 & 2. (Increase of 111%.) Note the increases have just about all been in the MS64 and under coins. Only 1 more gem has come out in the six years.

1901-S: In 1991 there were 9, 7, 2 & 6. Today, 10, 7, 5, & 6. The difference is 1 more low end unc and 3 MS65's. Possibly there has been some shifting around here with some of the MS63-64 coins being upgraded to MS65, because I know of a couple of low end unc having been certified during this period. Overall not much change. Just 4 coins in six years (one of these MS65's was the Nevada School cornerstone specimen). An increase of 16.67%.

1909-O: Another tough "O" Mint date. Numbers were 22, 13, 2 & 2 in 1991 and 24, 16, 4 & 3 today. An increase of 9 coins, across the board. (Increase of 20.51%.)

1913-S: In 1991 there were 11, 18, 9 & 1. Today, 11, 18, 13 & 5. The difference of 8 additional gems almost certainly reflects the upward shifting of MS64 and MS65 coins, because I know that some lower MS coins entered the market during the time. (Increase of 20.5%.) Has this date gone up the rarity scale since 1989 when it only ranked 20th? I don't know. Someone has to do a complete analysis for the set. I get the feeling it might have, but only a few notches. It is certainly not the 3rd scarcest date at the moment!

1914-S: 13, 12, 6 & 1 in 1991 vs. 29, 15, 15 & 6 in 1997. Surprisingly the pop has about doubled (103%).

1916-D: The most common date. 489, 287, 129 & 20 in 1991 vs. 735, 490, 231 & 54 in 1997. An increase of 585 coins which represents 63% over the original number.

Are there any conclusions we can draw? It would be better to analyze the whole set. In fact, all three Barber series to get a trend. In 1989 I thought the cream would rise to the top. In other words, that the 1901-S and 1896-S and probably the 1913-S also would rise to the top of the rankings as more of the more common dates came out and were certified. This has indeed happened with the 96-S and 01-S and to a limited extend with the 13-S. The 97-S, 98-O and 14-S have all doubled in pop and so will drift down the rankings. The 09-O is hanging tough, increasing like the 13-S.

The interesting thing is that though the real keys aren't adding many new coins, neither are some of the others so that even if 20 years from now the 1901-S is indeed number 1, it may not be so much rarer than a few other dates which sell for far less. I can just see the year 2017 having a total ms pop for the 1901-S of 35 coins and selling at the 2017 price of \$75,000-\$500,000, depending on the grade, while some other date has just 10-15 more coins and sells for \$3,000 - \$20,000! Can you?



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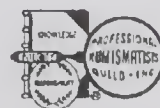
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AN INTERESTING 1908-O BARBER DIME

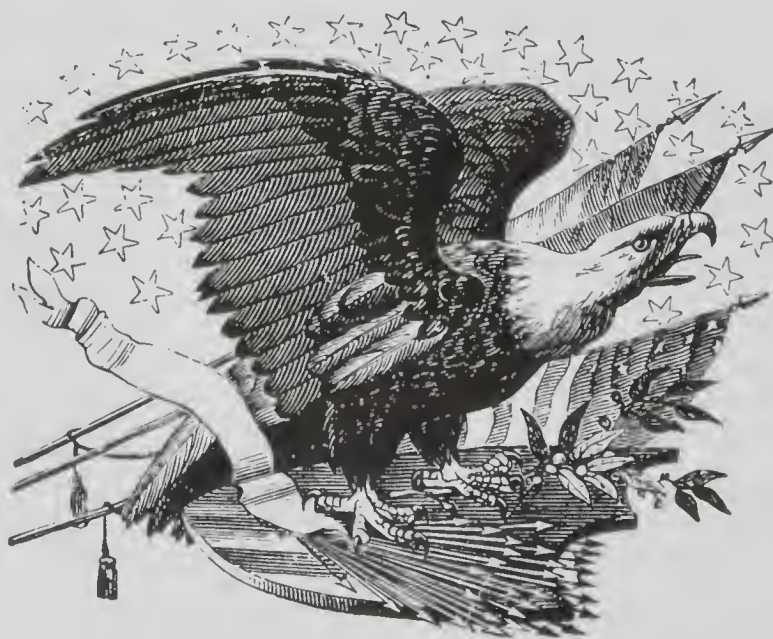
By Jack White

The new 1908-O dime has a reputation of being an average strike for a New Orleans dime. This date is sandwiched between the 1907-O, which is acknowledged as the poorest struck dime, and the 1909-O, which is a weakly struck product of the last year of coinage at the New Orleans mint. I own a dozen specimens of the 1907-O, fine and above, all weakly and unevenly struck, often displaying die bucklining and "mumps," more commonly seen on Barber halves.

I recently acquired a pair of 1908-O dimes, one VG-10, and the other a sharp VF. I've never seen a New Orleans dime displaying the severe die polishing marks evident on these two dimes. The corn silk at three o'clock on the reverse isn't attached to the corn ear at all. The large leaf under the D in dime is lacking a complete stem and is separated from the wreath by the thickness of the bow knot. The leaf at nine o'clock is missing its outside portion next to the rim. The cluster of four buds at eleven o'clock are not only unattached to the main shaft, they are separated from each other as well! They appear as pieces of broken matter floating in space. The two stocks of the wreath which normally cross above the "N" in ONE, only touch and then just barely.

There is a die chip in the lower section of the "E" in dime, forming just under the crossbar, not touching the base. This blob was mentioned by Russell Easterbrooks in the BCCS winter 1996 *Journal*, though Russell had not observed this die chip prior to 1909.

The mint mark is very thin at both top and bottom, with the right side noticeably thicker than the left. Interestingly, the obverse is exceptionally well struck showing strong definition in Miss Liberty's features.





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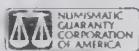
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REASONS FOR COUNTERSTAMPING

By Russell Easterbrooks

Numismatically a counterstamped coin is two coins in one. The Barber enthusiast finds the coin of interest because it's a "Barber." Yet our curiosity about this counterstamp creates interest. What does it mean, why was it punched on this coin, can the mark be identified, where can I find information about the stamp, etc.?

There are many reasons why coins were counterstamped. Some were for advertising purposes, others were at the whim of a tradesman whos' punches were designed for other uses.

Advertising your trade, shop, tavern or other business on coinage became a popular way to call attention to your enterprise. Silversmiths, jewelers, and gunsmiths, for example, all possessed punches for their trade. Literature on these subjects contains numerous references available to the researcher looking to compare the counterstamped coin with a specific tradesperson's work.

Small denomination coins in particular were already in the hands of the population and the cost of counterstamping was low, so this became a useful advertising medium.

Coins were also counterstamped as love tokens, mementos, and souvenirs. Still others were counterstamped for political purposes, or to designate a coins circulation in a given geographical location.

I want to thank Bob Harlow for this great photo of a 1900-S quarter with the counterstamps, "Sept. 11 1891" and "Sept. 11 1901." (Also notice the die crack from the "T" in TRUST running into the stars.)



Today there are nearly as many unidentified counterstamps as there are examples that can be traced. Continued research will undoubtedly identify many counterstamps source. Yet others will remain mementos to history, with their true meaning left to the imagination of the beholder.

The Roy H. Van Ormer collection, featured in Bowers and Merena's 1985 Four Memorable Collections Catalog, contains many interesting counterstamped coins. The most notable Barbers include: a worn 1899 half displaying the stamp, "Eagle Lock Co/Terryville, CT"; a 1909 dime displaying "Pearsall/High Speed/Pearsall." There is also a 1904 Liberty Nickel with the counterstamp "Dayton Rodgers MFG. Co."

Counterstamps add a level of character to a coin's travels, as well as a second distinctive use over its monetary value. With interest in these coins increasing, watch for examples at your next coin show.



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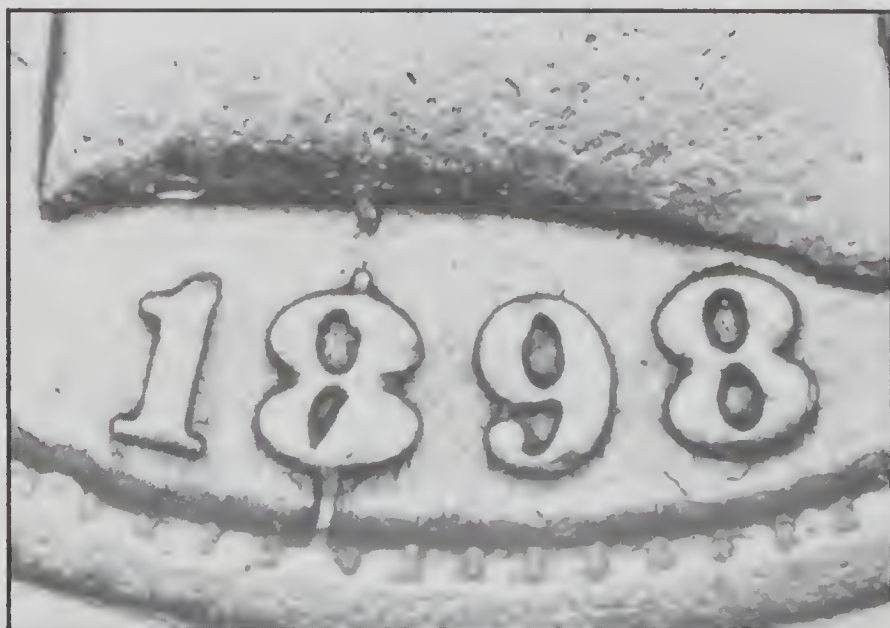
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A VERMONT COIN SHOW

By Russell Easterbrooks

The Burlington Coin Show is an enjoyable experience, avidly awaited by area collectors as one of Vermont's largest shows. Twice each year this show attracts over 150 collectors who examine 40 tables of coins. Small by national standards, this show's level of excitement and expectation would match any of the largest of shows.

Upon entering the show's busy floor, I anxiously began searching the tables for high grade Barber dimes and interesting colonial coins. The first coin I examined was a nice MS-62, 1895 dime priced at \$600. I seldom buy uncirculated dimes, preferring XF and AU



coins. So I passed on this beauty, which was well worth the time to examine. Next I observed two 1787 Massachusetts cents, one fine, the other nearly VF. I quickly reached a price with the dealer of \$100 for the pair. (A good price on today's market.)

When I started around the tables for the second time, I inquired about lower grade Barber dimes in each dealer's stock. My first find was a strong VG 1905-O dime and yes, it was the micro-O variety. This was a nice original problem free coin for the bargain price of \$1.50. It's too bad this dealer doesn't read the Journal, or is it?

My next find was a VF 1898 dime with a heavy die break through the first eight in the date. This was also a nice original coin, for the painless price of \$7.

After spending some time looking at common Barbers and talking "coins" with dealers and collectors, I began the trip home. There was one more stop I wanted to make at an antique shop that often has a few coins. When I got to the shop, the first case I peered into contained some coins. The owner happily opened the case and I examined a very nice 1909-D dime marked, AU \$150. This coin was original with no sign of wear or marks and looked more like a proof coin, so I bought it.

Once I got home I examined my new found treasures under my microscope for over an hour. I highly recommend a good microscope for viewing die breaks, repunched dates, and mint marks. I found along with the die break in

the date, the 1898 dime also had a die break across the ear of corn on the reverse. I was so interested with the die break in the date I had not noticed this second break while examining the coin at the show!

The 1909-D clearly looked uncirculated, so I sent it off to ANA to get another opinion. You can imagine my excitement when I received my 1909-D dime back from the ANA, encapsulated and graded MS-63!

Coin shows of this size can be found in most states. Surely many of our members have made interesting finds, such as mine. A few minutes spent writing down your experiences would make an interesting and informative article for us all to enjoy.



A PICTORIAL BARBER DIME

By Jack White

Over the Christmas holidays at a small local coin show, I saw my first pictorial love token, and on a Barber dime no less. The coin is dated 1892 and the dealer described the scene on the coin as "Church." I now own seven Barber dime love tokens, all dated 1892. I also know of a dealer who possesses an 1892-S love token dime, with the mint mark area left untouched by the engraver.

The new Barber design was obviously very popular with romantics, as the love token fad had peaked in the previous two decades. Apparently the new coinage designs of 1892 were well received by artists who took advantage of this new "Canvas." The other pieces I own were pictured in the spring 1996 issue of the BCCS Journal.

The obverse grades a nice VF, yet the reason for the four holes escapes me. Finally, is the building actually a church or simply a house with an adjoining tower?

Editor's note: The foreground appears to simulate ocean waves, and the tower may represent a light house. Notice the bird overhead? Seagulls were often used in seashore paintings of the times.



CHARLES BARBER, Profile of a Mint Engraver

By Greg Smith

January 2, 1892 at 9 a.m., the first Barber coins were struck at Philadelphia. For 24 years, until 1916 for the dimes and quarters (1915 for the half dollars), coinage designed by this second generation chief engraver circulated in the United States.

Barber was the son of English emigrant William Barber, who served as Chief Engraver at the United States Mint from 1869 until his death in 1879. Charles was appointed to replace his father by President Rutherford Hayes in January 1880. This 40-year-old didn't miss a step in replacing his father. Charles had learned many valuable lessons while serving as an assistant engraver under his father's tenure. He served his post with a complete disdain for outside engravers' work and is considered by many to have been the most creatively oppressive bureaucrat to have ever held the post of chief engraver. Walter Breen, one of the most respected researchers and authors in American numismatics, has little good to say about Barber (or his coins). "Charles Barber's record as chief engraver of the United States Mint is notable for only two things, dullness and adamant opposition to outsiders' designs." Despite opinions such as Breen's, the Barber series are quite popular issues with collectors. Reasons for the coins favor with collectors (besides the many designs), are the many oddities and varieties Barber provided by his autocratic rule over the mint. One example being Barber's first design struck for circulation, the 1883 Liberty "V" nickel. The reverse of this coin is dominated by the Roman numeral V designating its denomination. Barber then placed the Latin motto E Pluribus Unum under the "V" and thought it unnecessary to include the word "CENTS." Enterprising con men quickly saw the advantage of gold plating the coins and passing them as the similarly sized five dollar gold pieces! By the time the first production run of nearly five and a half million coins was complete, mint officials were well aware of the problem with the so-called "Racketer" nickel, and ordered Barber to add the word "CENTS" under the "V."

Barber has held a special place in collectors' hearts by creating many of the most cherished rarities known in the last century. The most prolific Chief Engraver ever to hold the post, Barber co-designed the extremely rare pattern \$4 gold piece (known as the "Stella"). Barber was solely responsible for designing one million dollars worth of dimes, quarters, and half dollars for King Kalakaua of Hawaii in 1883. His obverse portrait on the 1892 and 93 Columbian Exposition half dollars (the first commemorative coins produced by the United States), brought criticism from some and acclaim from others for his ability to "catch a likeness" (although there is no known portrait of Christopher Columbus). The Columbian half dollar's sister coin, the Isabella quarter dollar, was also designed by Barber for the Exposition.

The most important series of Barber's design is the dimes, quarters, and half dollars that circulated in this country from 1892 until 1916. Collectors savor the challenge of completing a set of these coins in any denomination, at any grade level. The Barber dime set includes one of the great coin rarities, the 1894-S dime, of which only 24 were struck. The mystery and legend behind this coin's small mintage figure, is unfortunately, undocumented by mint records. Another mystery surrounds the 1707-D dime. Reportedly some barrels filled with these dimes were lost in a wagon convoy in the Rocky Mountains, enroute to Federal Reserve Banks in the Southwest. Although Mint records would confirm the loss, they were destroyed many years ago during house-cleaning.

Like all Barber coinage, the great challenge is finding nice coins for your collection. These coins worked long hard years, although in diminishing quantities right up until the use of silver coins was effectively discontinued in 1965. Unfortunately, many lower grade "Barbers" surely went into the melting pot during the great silver "burns" of the 60's and 70's. A pity for serious collectors looking for varieties and error coins. As historian Cornelius Vermuele observed of Barber's coinage: "Of all American coins long in circulation, no series has stood the wearing demands of modern coinage so well as the half dollar, quarter, and dime developed by Barber. Even when these coins have been worn nearly smooth, their outlines suggest the harmony of interior detail in careful planes of relief that make uncirculated specimens a pleasure to contemplate."

Barber's technical skills have never been questioned, for he perfected low relief coins that required less die pressure, and thus prolonged the life of the dies, while producing more uniform and easily handled (stacked) coins. Many of his dimes, quarters, and halves are notorious for their soft strike and lack of detail, NOT any fault of the designer, but softness of strike, often more the result of primitive, worn machinery used to manufacture the coins primarily at the branch mints.

Barber designed more coins than any other Chief Engraver, and holds a very special place in numismatic history for the beautiful coins he created, as well as the rarity and lore accompanying many of his designs. Whatever may be said about the man, and precious little is known about him other than through Mint records, he was in the right place at the right time to leave his mark in numismatic history.

Editor's note: Thank you, Greg, for this interesting article. I must mention that Greg's article was over eight pages in length, discussing many other aspects of numismatics, and because of space limitations I have condensed it somewhat. Greg also mentioned he has submitted articles to the Smithsonian magazine in the past, and I look forward to seeing his informative articles in my mailbox for future use in the

Journal. Speaking of the Smithsonian, I recently ordered some photos of pattern coins in their collection for future use in the Journal. Anyone interested in purchasing photos from the Smithsonian should send a letter requesting your needs (use Judd numbers for patterns) to:

National Numismatic Collection
Musuem of American History
Smithsonian Institution
Room 4000, MRC 609
10th Constitution Ave, N.W.
Washington, DC 20560

**Judd #1766 Half Dollar Pattern
Designed by Charles Barber**



(Photo courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution)

*A finial note: I have enjoyed putting together this Journal and hope you find it interesting. How do you like the new cover? I have begun work on the next issue, and I look forward to seeing your articles and Barber Bits in my mail box. Phil will be supplying an article highlighting his experiences at the Eliasberg sale and Dave Bowers has graciously supplied me with more photos.

Happy Collecting.



*... "I am writing to report a new variety of 1911-S Barber half dollar. The coin (which grades VF-25) has a clearly repunched mint mark. Doubling is evident at the beginning of the "S," at upper inner loop of the "S," at the outer curve of the "S," and especially at the tail of the "S."

From: Paul Vine

Editor's note: I dropped Paul a letter asking him to send me this coin so Tom Mulvaney might photograph it for future use in the Journal. Also, I should mention The Herman Halpern and Gerald O. Warner collections, cataloged by Bowers and Merena, contains a wonderful close-up photo of an 1895-S Large S over small S quarter graded MS-64. I will inquire about the possibility of Dave Bowers letting the Society have a copy of this photo for a future Journal.

*... From: *The 1938 Samuel McVitty Collection, cataloged by Max Mehl*

"A complete set of Liberty head dimes. The 1912 and 1916 are uncirculated with full mint luster; all others are proofs. A beautiful and scarce set, difficult to complete today. These dimes catalog at retail from \$1.50 to \$2 each, and even at these prices they are difficult to obtain. 25 pcs."

*... From: *June 20, 1953, Numismatic Scrapbook Magazine*

"Henry Theilen states that he doesn't particularly 'look' for diebreaks in circulation but recently he picked up a 1911-D dime which to the naked eye has the I missing in DIME."

*... From: *Postal History*

"During the 1890's settlers of a new township in Texas, erected a community mail box on the trail to San Antonio. Passing freight wagons would pick up the mail, charging one dime for each round trip. This early mail box, often referred to as the "Dime Box," was very successful and played a significant role in the new towns name, Dime Box, Texas."

Editor's note: It's amazing the history that can be immortalized by something as simple as a dime. We may never know how many Barber dimes actually circulated in such a way, but thanks to the dime, one of this country's first mail boxes will never be forgotten.

*... From: *Eliasberg Catalog Part 2*

"Silver coins of the New Orleans mint are very difficult to obtain with even a decent strike. This situation comes to the fore in particular in the Morgan Silver dollar series, but extends into the Barber coinage as well. The reason is that at the New Orleans mint the dies in the presses were spaced slightly farther apart than they should have, which facilitated long life and reduce breakage, but at the same time caused lightness of impression in certain areas."

*... From: *December 20, 1952 Numismatic Scrapbook*

"A father and son combination manufactured die struck halves over a period of five years and were arrested in May 1938. Secret Service agents seized 122 finished coins dated 1899 and 107 of those dated 1912, together with steel dies bearing the dates of 1907, 1914, and 1915. (Other dies for the Liberty Walking half dollars were also found.) During the five year period some 2,800 pieces of counterfeit 1899-S and 1912-S halves were placed in circulation. The 1899's weighed 181.65 grains and the 1912's weighed 181.25 grains." (Standard weight was 192.9 grains.)"

*... From: *July 20, 1953 Numismatic Scrapbook*

"Ed Schulman, has a 1909 quarter which has two 'O' mint marks. The two identical 'O's' are side by side with about 1/2mm space between them. The piece has had considerable circulation but the mint marks are very plain. Probably a number of pieces were struck from this die before an inspector caught the error."

Editor's note: This would be a great coin to have seen, wonder where it is today.

*... From: *The Rare Coin Review, #102*

"In the 1950's, a Virginia numismatist set about hoarding all of the proof 1914 and 1915 halves he could find; and cleaned all he bought; thus, in terms of availability, toned proofs of these two dates are even scarcer than the low mintages suggest."

*... From *The 1996 Red Book*

"The 1914 Barber Half dollar has the interesting distinction of being the lowest-mintage proof of this design, as well as, the lowest mintage business strike."

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